DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 247 250 TM 840 419

AUTHOR Hendrick, Irving G.; MacMillan, Donald L.
TITLE The Role of Mental Testing in Shaping Special Classes for the Retarded, 1900-1945.
PUB DATE 23 Apr 84
NOTE 40p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (68th, New Orleans, LA, April 23-27, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Compulsory Education; *Educational History; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Individual Differences; *Intelligence Tests; *Mental Retardation; Severe Mental Retardation; *Special Education; *Student Placement
IDENTIFIERS Council for Exceptional Children; Terman (Lewis M)

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the history of the placement of mentally retarded students during the first half of this century. In 1900, it was generally assumed that custodial care of feebleminded persons was necessary to protect society. Severely retarded students were regularly excluded from public school attendance. Soon school officials began adopting behavioral management and instructional strategies for coping with students who advanced through the school system more slowly than expected. The schools had achieved nearly universal pupil enrollment, making pupil differences a serious challenge to educators. Not surprisingly, special classes sprang up, and alternative instructional approaches and promotion policies were considered. A perceived need for sorting students encouraged the development of intelligence tests. Though low mental test scores and grades contributed to special placement decisions, teacher judgments always played a large part in making special education assignments. During the 1920's, educators showed increased confidence in intelligence tests and their use for classification. In contrast, the International Council for the Education of Exceptional Children, founded in 1922 by a group of educators, was designed primarily to emphasize the education of the "special child," rather than identification or classification. Though services were being extended, difficulties for special education continued to mount until the dramatic changes of the 1960's. (BW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED247250

American Educational Research Association
Annual Meeting, April 23, 1984
Session 1.17

Irving G. Hendrick
Donald L. MacMillan
School of Education
University of California
Riverside, CA 92521

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
I. G. Hendrick
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

THE ROLE OF MENTAL TESTING IN SHAPING SPECIAL CLASSES FOR THE RETARDED, 1900-1945[1]

Future historians who attempt to interpret--or even chronicle--recent developments in the education and training of mentally retarded persons may be struck by how thoroughly reformers and the courts of our day have rejected policies developed in this area during the first two-thirds of the present century. Since Brown v. Board of Education[2] the prevailing social ideology in America has championed the rights of disadvantaged persons, including the mentally retarded.

Recent reforms in the field of mental retardation are known even to the casual student: Congress in 1975 acted to assure that school systems would provide "free appropriate public education" for all of the nation's children, including the severely retarded; earlier policies favoring segregated special classes for mildly retarded learners gave way to an ideology favoring "mainstreaming"; intelligence tests used to classify students were discredited sharply and even banned in one state for use with some students;[3] and concern over stigma had risen to unprecidented heights. While some legal scholars have described the "Education for All Handicapped Children Act"[4] as a "modern wilderness," there can be little question that it constituted a major victory for tendencies in the American character toward equality and humane treatment of the handicapped.[5]

Just as those tendencies had been supported by four decades of

TM 840 115

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

increasing social activism by the federal government, national prosperity, and expanding new knowledge from medical and behavioral research, so too had turn of the century policies toward retardation been shaped by the social history of that period. Even before the Statue of Liberty proclaimed in 1886 a welcome to the tired, the poor, and the huddled masses of other lands, the Congress had taken action to close the doors on defectives and undesirables from all lands. More troubling to second and third generation Americans, and to those whose roots on the new soil ran even deeper, was the fact that the 1881-1890 decade would be the last in which England, Ireland, and Germany would be the leading sources of new immigrants.[6] After 1890 the new arrivals came from places less compatible with traditional Anglo-Saxon values. One product of the rapidly increasing flow of new immigrants in the minds of earlier settlers was a fear that dependency and deviancy were rising. In an America primarily rural and relatively homogeneous, it was assumed that families and local communities could assume responsibility for the ill and deficient among them. Asylums were already in existence, but it was assumed that they were centers only of last resort.[7]

By late in the last century the proportion of new immigrants who settled in large cities swelled. While no American city could boast a population of a million in 1860, by 1890 New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia all could. At the turn of the century New York, with a population of 3,437,202, was already larger than Los Angeles or Chicago are today.[8] Large city population still constituted but a small fraction of the nation's population. However, while the foreign born constituted but 14.4 percent of the nation's total population in 1900, they made up

29.18 percent of the population in cities over 25,000, and over 40 percent of the population in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco.

Policy makers of the period were quite aware that extended public school attendance would be needed in order to induct new arrivals and their children into the social, economic, and political ways of the dominant culture. Fears of pauperism, illiteracy, and criminality among the new immigrants were reinforced by data of the period. For example, it was reported to the Congress that in 1900 Portugese immigrants entered the country with a 60 percent illiteracy rate and $10.47 in per capita cash; southern Italians had a 54.5 percent illiteracy rate and brought $8.84. By contrast, only 5.8 percent of the entering Germans and 2 percent of the entering English were illiterate and came with $38.90 and $41.51 respectively.[9]

The social philosophy of the period was shaped by a diversity of forces, not the least of which were the orthodox and reform varieties of Social Darwinism. The more orthodox influence led its adherents to conclude that a high percentage of the new immigrants were hopelessly defective, requiring that they be segregated, sterilized, and institutionalized.[10] But, if anything is clear about the social and intellectual history of Americans in the twentieth century, it is that no single ideology has ever enjoyed total dominance.[11] Additional and sometimes competing influences at work during the early twentieth century included the considerable force and diversity of scientific knowledge, social democracy, pragmatic philosophy, and humanitarian concern. These operated in some sense to blunt the harsher tendencies of Social Darwinism.

Between the mid and late nineteenth century the public had

assumed responsibility for an unknown fraction of mentally retarded persons in a manner consistent with contemporary values and knowledge. That knowledge and those values had enertained the prospect of asylums being therapeutic environments where subnormality could be cured. Such an optimistic view was not prominent between 1890 and World War II. More common was the view that custodial care of feebleminded persons was necessary to protect society. Early scientific studies of feeble-mindedness had seemed to support the opinion that retardation was largely incurable, was transmitted from generation to generation, and was particularly common among the poor and foreign born.[12] Mentally retarded persons, in a word, were a menace to society, but a menace that could not be ignored by social institutions.

There was, to be sure, an undetermined proportion of severely retarded children who were cared for by their families as best they could. Following his interviews with pupil census takers in Philadelphia, John Haney reported in 1910 that

> parents are apt to disregard these unfortunates in the enumeration and not mention them at all. To the parents the story is so old and the tragedy so hopeless that the educational possibilities of the defective have, in their minds, been reduced to zero. Such a child is for school purposes, they think, a nonentity. In the experience of the writer nothing but repeated questioning was ever able to elicit the real state of affairs.[13]

Not until after World War II was any serious effort made to extend public education to more patently retarded children in the nation's schools. Indeed, state statutes regularly excluded such children from public

school attendance. The school's mission was not to be diluted by admitting persons whose physical or mental disability was, in the words of the California statute, "inimical to the welfare of the other pupils."[14]

If the integrity of public education was to be protected by keeping seriously retarded persons out of public schools, the welfare of society needed to be defended by keeping them in state institutions for the insane and feebleminded. Over time, however, space and budget constraints precluded long term custodial care for all but the most severely retarded cases. Long term incarceration was one way to protect society, but when that was not feasible, training and education, coupled with sterilization prior to release into the community was seen as a satisfactory alternative. One administrator of a state mental hospital in California, Dr. Fred Butler, related proudly to an interviewer that he had been "instrumental in sterilizing 5,284 patients, the most of any institution of /its kind/ in the world."[15] As early as 1919, Dr. Butler and his staff at Sonoma State Hospital began training and releasing patients who had been sterilized to the community, there to assume menial jobs and live independent or semi-independent lives.

Early in the present century, city school officials began adopting distinct behavioral management and instructional strategies for coping with children whose advancement from grade to grade through the school system was slower than expected, "retarded" to use a term current in that day. While Leonard Ayres, writing in his capacity as secretary for the Russell Sage Foundation's Backward Children

Investigation, was quick to agree with his 1909 era contemporaries that the public schools need not be concerned with the "defective" one to two percent of the school age population, he was not about to dismiss so easily those with lesser mental handicaps. His book, Laggards in Our Schools,[16] became one of the most influential early twentieth century contributions to the efficiency movement.

Ayres placed responsibility for the failure of students on city school systems. Courses of study were seen as being "fitted not to the slow child or to the average child but to the unusually bright ones."[17] Failure led students to repeat grades or drop out of school, alternatives which were neither desirable nor efficient. Responsibility for retaining children in school rested clearly with public officials and school administrators. The best schools were those which promoted a maximum number of students. By 1911 the United States Bureau of Education endeavored to define, at least tentatively, which children were the responsibility of public school authorities.[18] Included on the list were the "dull and feebly gifted." Those "to be dismissed from the oversight and care of public school authorities" included the morally insane, violently insane, demented children, all feebleminded children below the grade of middle-grade inbecile, and high-grade moral imbeciles. Children for whom public school responsibility was "uncertain" included high-grade inbeciles and all feebleminded children of higher grade than high grade imbeciles.[19] The Bureau's survey of that year revealed that 99 city school systems were providing classes for mentally defective children, while 220 were providing classes for "backward children."[20]

Early progress in the education of less capable learners had virtually nothing to do with any campaign to attract retarded children to the schools by advocates of the retarded. Seriously retarded children had been exempted from the early compulsory attendance laws. Even mildly retarded children were seen as a troublesome lot for whom the schools had been made responsible. Still, by the turn of the century an impressive share of the nation's school age children were finding their names on school registers. Necessarily, not all of them were normally capable learners.

City school officials were hardly allowed time to celebrate the common school's victory in achieving nearly universal pupil enrollment before critics of the system began pointing out its shortcomings. Enrollment was impressive enough, but attendance was less impressive. In Springfield Ohio, for example, nearly 14 percent of the pupils attended school less than half of the 184 school days during 1907.[21] For them, retarded progress seemed assurred. Equally disturbing was the low "index of efficiency" which city school systems were compiling. Frequently the schools were retaining through the eighth grade fewer than half of the students they enrolled in the first grade. "In the final analysis," Ayres pointed out, "the one condition indispensable to school progress is attendance."[22] Academic retardation was all but an inevitable consequence of poor attendance. The revelation by Ayres of disturbing attendance figures, coupled with a realization that compulsory attendance laws were only beginning to be taken seriously in a few states--and not seriously at all in many others--led educators to promote an

increased emphasis on the enforcement of these laws. Their efforts, driven by substantial support for the idea of child labor legislation from organized labor and philanthropic groups, occurred in a society which seemed to favor a broad range of legislated behavior.[23]

Thus, even as public school educators were ill prepared to deal with students who preferred the world of work to that of books, they were compelled by social conditions to extend their reach for students. Presumably, compulsory attendance laws were necessary to attract and hold those children whose parents would not have led them to school without compulsion.[24] For the schools, the problem after about 1910 was to adapt programs suitable to this reluctant new constitutency.[25] There was another constituency, albeit a much smaller one, which included marginally "feeble-minded" children whose families preferred for them to be served by public schools instead of residential institutions or the home exclusively.

While the former group would enter public schools in large numbers, and the latter in much smaller numbers, pupil differences for the first time became a serious challenge to educators. Pupils who failed and/or became discouraged, could not be counted on simply to disappear. Not surprisingly, special classes and other grouping strategies sprang from differences in student achievement as measured and perceived by teachers. As early as the 1890s several cities began providing special classes for children whose progress through the grades was below normal, mainly truants and disciplinary cases.[26] Although most city school officials probably did not consider the

training of defective children as part of their mission, by the first decade of the new century they came to comprehend their obligation to serve those making less than normal progress for a variety of reasons, one of which was slower than normal mental development.

The need to cope with slower learners stimulated school authorities to consider various alternative instructional approaches and promotion policies. A system of half year promotions was attempted in some places, while schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts devised an intricate system of dividing the upper elementary course of study in two ways, permitting students to complete a traditional fourth through ninth grade curriculum in four, five, or six years. Special teachers were appointed to offer personal instruction to pupils capable of rapid advancement, as well as those who required special assistance in mastering minimal requirements. Segregation by ability was not part of the plan. Other plans involved having all of the children in a common room for the study of certain subjects, but divided into as many as four or five groups for other subjects.[27] Whatever plan was adopted, the object was for the student who had failed a subject or a grade to lose as little time as possible.

As early as 1899 William Henry Maxwell, school superintendent of Greater New York, committed the city to develop a center for the training of mentally and physically disabled children. That same year Elizabeth Farrell established an ungraded special class at Public School 1 in Manhattan for children who were truants or otherwise were not fitting in with the norms of school progress.[28] By all accounts the

class was conducted as a noble and progressive effort at social uplift, with its teacher intent on improving the lot of the students enrolled. The curriculum was marked by practical activities and projects, with academic subjects leading to applied ends. With Superintendent Maxwell's support, the project continued. By 1902 New York was experimenting with special classes for dull children, defective children, and even "idiotic or permanently defective children" at six public schools in Manhattan.[29]

The need for special classes soon grew precipitously when, in October 1903, New York state implemented its child labor law. Almost overnight thousands of thirteen and fourteen year old boys and girls, many of them without English language skills, found themselves in the first four elementary grades. New York's answer was to extend its offering of special classes to include three new categories of service: Special C for recently arrived immigrants from non-English speaking countries, Special D for boys and girls of fourteen years of age whose parents wanted them to work, and Special E for truants and incorrigibles.[30] The addition of these classes left the ungraded classes free to focus on the needs of mentally subnormal children.

Thus, well before inviting Henry C. Goddard of Kallikak family and Binet-Simon intelligence testing fame to study their ungraded classes in 1912, school officials in New York had begun to sort thousands of pupils as best they could according to pupil attendance, classroom behavior, English language proficiency, and academic performance. The development of intelligence tests was not prerequisite to the

sorting of students by the public schools, a fact which is sometimes forgotten in our day. Rather, the perceived need for sorting gave rise to a desire for infusing the classification process with greater efficiency, uniformity, reliability, and scientific respectability. It was this need for standards which attracted the enthusiastic support of city school officials. Henry Goddard's attacks on the school's affinity for equality, and his own warnings against social deviance, caught their attention.[31]

Lewis Terman's The Measurement of Intelligence (1916), and The Intelligence of School Children (1919), provided an important new scientific basis for grouping and served to stimulate increased use of student segregation.[32] But granted that, it is likely that homogeneous grouping practices and segregated classes for mentally retarded children would have been developed even without mental testing. Grouping and segregation were responses to a situation, not to a test. Expanded school attendance, arising from urban growth, immigration, and compulsory attendance and child labor laws, was too profound. State of the art knowledge about how poorly educated teachers could cope successfully with an immense range of student differences was too modest for efficiency minded administrators to continue long with heterogeneous classes. Terman's view's on mental testing corresponded nicely with the school's need to cope with the growing problem of academic retardation and served to stimulate action in setting up special classes.

Certainly Terman was not modest in proclaiming the centrality

of mental test scores in measuring the mental capacity of students, or in predicting their social and occupational behavior in vivid terms. He left no doubt that feebleminded children did not belong in public schools. Their propensity toward criminality and capacity for reproducing their kind inflicted great burdens upon society. As for the role of special classes, Terman proclaimed that

> special classes in great numbers will always be needed in public schools, but their true function is to deal with doubtful and borderline cases, training as many of these as possible along lines which will enable them to earn an honest living. Special classes can also provide a moral training which will combat non-social tendencies.
>
> Not until the institutional cases have been removed from the public schools, and not until the borderline cases have been placed in special classes, can the work of the school with normal children proceed as it ought.[33]

Terman's message was not missed by leading schoolmen of his day. California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Will C. Wood, for example, declared it an "extravagance to keep feebleminded children in classes with other children."[34] Referring directly to Terman's work, Wood stated that at least two percent of the children enrolled in California public schools were "definitely feebleminded."[35]

Power and resources for stimulating policy changes in 1920 rested more with superintendents of large cities than with state school superintendents. In some cities the changes were swift and

and profound; in others they were more subtle. Few could top the responsiveness of Detroit Superintendent Charles S. Berry who, beginning in 1920, had group intelligence tests administered to 10,000 first grade children.[36] The consequence for the young children was that they were placed at one of three class levels according to their scores. The superior 20 persent constituted the X group, the inferior 20 percent were assigned to the Z group, and rest were placed in the Y group. Similar policies were commonly followed throughout the United States over the next half century.

But while public school educators were quick to agree that extreme hetrogenity was not desirable, and accept Terman's contribution on mental testing, many--probably most--were unwilling to disregard their own observations concerning pupil performance. True, mental testing was growing in use and respectability, but its merit also was being discussed and criticized by influential Americans, including John Dewey and Walter Lippman.[37] While a retrospective proof of contemporary influences is difficult to make, one might suspect that users of tests had some incentive to base their decisions concerning student classification on multiple criteria.

In Los Angeles, a Department of Educational Research was established in May 1917, while a Department of Psychology was formed the following year. Almost immediately Dr. Arthur H. Sutherland, Director of the Psychology Department, began classifying some two thousand children already enrolled in ungraded classes using the Binet tests, health cards, and records of student performance in classes.[38] He recommended the

establishment of differentiated special rooms, including development schools for subnormal children and adjustment rooms for various types of less seriously retarded children. Soon the department took on the triple responsibility of testing the mentality and school accomplishment of children, devising materials for individual instruction, and supervising the special schools and classrooms.

Starting in 1919, children were selected for admission to one of the four development schools, or one of the four development rooms in regular schools, after principals placed their names on a list of those who were overage, oversize, or simply not making good school progress. After personnel in the Psychology Department reviewed the pupils' school performance and health cards, group educational and intelligence tests were administered. Those who fell below a certain unspecified level were given an individual intelligence examination. Decisions about admission to the development classes were based on three criteria: test data, school performance record, and testimony from teachers.[39]

A decade later the development centers had grown from four to twelve, while the number of development rooms outside of centers had increased from four to thirty-seven. A total of 2,454 children were enrolled; 1,733 at the centers and 721 in the rooms.[40] Children were still assigned to the centers and rooms according to the same criteria used in 1919. All were referred to the development program supervisor by a teacher, principal, or counselor. Each student so referred was them given an individual mental test, had his/her test results and school record reviewed by the supervisor, and finally, if the case

appeared to warrant it, the child was transferred to one of the development classes.

Children in Los Angeles were never segregated on the basis of low mental test scores alone. Further, it is doubtful that those who were segregated would have met a different fate had only their classroom performance and socio-economic factors been at issue. Teacher judgements never ceased playing a large part in decisions concerning special education assignments. What did seem to increase over time was the confidence which school officials placed in the predictive value of intelligence tests. In a word, the I.Q. numbers appeared to influence their expectations concerning student achievement.

In June 1929 the Los Angeles schools completed a survey of 2,115 "subnormal" children assigned to development classes.[41] Characteristic of large city school systems of the day, test performance information was not in short supply. Data included student performance on the Stanford Revision of the Binet-Simon Scale for most children, but in cases of some foreign children, the results of individual performance tests, such as the Pintor-Paterson series or the Kohs Block Design, were used. In addition, vocabulary was measured by the Los Angeles Word Recognition Test, Reading by the Los Angeles Elementary or Primary Reading Tests, Arithemetic Reasoning by the Los Angeles Diagnostic, and Arithmetic Fundamentals by the Los Angeles Mixed Fundamentals test.

As revealed by the study, the average chronological ages of children in the development classes would have placed them in the

seventh grade ("average chronological grade placement" was 7.2), while the average mental ages of the same students would have projected them to belong in the second grade ("average intelligence grade placement" was 2.8). Hence, the descrepancy between where they should be, based on age, and mental age, termed "average mental retardation," was 4 years, 5 months. The average I.Q. score for these students was 63.[42]

Officials seemed to trust the intelligence test data more than anything else. That is, when scores in arithmetic reasoning or arithmetic fundamentals exceeded the "intelligence grade placement," the conclusion was that student performance in those subjects had exceeded the "reasonable expectancy." District officials were aware, however, that the large percentage of foreign speaking children in their sample affected the scores on reading and language tests.[43]

While it was still accurate to say that mental test scores alone did not determine class placement in Los Angeles during the 1920s, the weight of evidence seemed to grow in favor of I.Q. scores, while the burden of proof switched to the child. In effect, a child could avoid a special class assignment if he or she had a low I.Q. only by solid performance in the classroom. An official school district publication presented it this way:

> The majority of the cases of subnormal children are "discovered" by means of the regular school survey. The statistical report from the counselor's record sheets lists the children with an I.Q. below 70, on the basis of group intelligence tests. If the academic

> accomplishment of these children corresponds to their low intelligence rating, they are recommended for an individual examination. ...if the child falls below 70 I.Q. on an individual examination given by a qualified examiner, the case is referred to the supervisor in charge of the Development Schools and Rooms.[44]

Children with I.Q. scores below 50 on an individual mental test were excluded from attendance anywhere in the system. It is noteworthy that I.Q. 50 has continued to be a cut-off score between two subgroups of mentally retarded persons.

Professional literature from the period authored by school officials in the pupil personnel services area generally agreed with the picture presented in Los Angeles. Professional experience appeared to affirm the increased confidence which educators were showing in intelligence tests. Still, exceptional cases, involving children with nearly identical scores being far apart in achievement, occurred often enough to keep the multiple criteria for special class assignment policy alive.[45] Thus, while intelligence tests were seen as a scientific and impersonal means of permitting a teacher to check his/her judgement, majority professional opinion suggested that "the test must not be used as a sole means of judging a child's ability or placement."[46]

In 1933, Virgil Dickson, Berkeley's assistant superintendent for research and guidance, told a state T.T.A. conference in Long Beach that "no child is eligible for membership in the special class unless by mental test he shows decided retardation, and also by careful trial in school it is discovered that he is unable to accomplish the work which

is associated with a regular class."[47] Two years earlier, in explaining why special classes were being maintained for mentally handicapped children in Berkeley, he related the same basic goals as had been stated by New York City officials some twenty years earlier, namely to give slow learners greater individual attention and improve their educational adjustment, while relieving the regular classes of responsibility for working with children who were unable to keep pace.[48]

Similar as well was the curriculum for retarded children in Berkeley. Like the programs in New York and Los Angeles, the curriculum included simple forms of ordinary academic work, since such work "was nearly always demanded by the pupils and their parents."[49] Manual activities and concrete object lessons were also included, since these subjects were intended to permit students to become self-supporting adults. According to R. C. Scheerenberger, the general curriculum pattern for mildly retarded pupils was much the same across the land and prevailed for more than half a century. That is to say, the first half of the day was devoted to the three R's and the latter half to such other subjects as manual training, domestic arts, physical education, music and art.[50]

The pessimistic views of Henry Goddard, Lewis Terman, and others concerning the social, moral, and intellectual depravity of retarded persons likely were ameliorated somewhat by humanitarian instincts which also prevailed during the early part of the century. The same range of social and intellectual forces which produced a sympathetic view toward children generally, and was manifest in one stream of the

progressive education movement, also helped soften the post-Spencerian contribution of science to testing and sorting. For all of Terman's influence on school system testing directors, his ability to shape the attitudes of teachers working with mentally retarded children was limited.

Elizabeth Farrell, New York's pioneer teacher and organizer of programs for the retarded named Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel as the influential persons in her professional life. Through her exemplary work with the ungraded classes in New York City, her summer training programs for teachers at the University of Pennsylvania, New York University, and Teachers College, Columbia, and through her professional journal, Ungraded (1915-1926), she likely did much to influence the attitudes of working teachers. For Farrell and her colleagues, focus on mentally retarded children did not center on the hopelessness of their cognitive capacity, their depravity, or on their exclusion from schools, but rather on their instruction.[51]

A significant and lasting influence of her work began in the summer of 1922 when certain faculty and advanced students associated with the Teachers College summer session of that year organized to form the International Council for the Education of Exceptional Children. Of the eleven participants who founded the organization that summer, all were women, and seven held positions with public school systems. Included were teachers of ungraded classes, inspectors and supervisiors of special classes, a principal of an opportunity school, and a conductor of psychological testing.[52] Henretta A. Johnson, supervisor of vocational guidance and special classes in Oakland, California, is

credited with pressing vigorously for the organization, but it was Elizabeth Farrell who was elected Council president and assumed major leadership responsibility during the early years. Significantly, the Council stated but three general aims, prominent of which was "to emphasize the education of the 'special child' rather than his identification or classification."[53]

Interesting by way of contrast was the formation of another professional group concerned with mental retardation, the organization which would become known as the American Association of Mental Deficiency (AAMD). In 1876 seven people met to form a group originally known as the Association of Medical Officers of American Institutions for Idiotic and Feebleminded Persons. Of the seven, six were men. Most were physicians who functioned in institutional settings and served the more seriously debilitated mentally retarded persons.[54] Their orientation stood in stark contrast to the CEC group composed primarily of women educators working in a public school setting with mildly retarded or marginal learners.

Even as some teachers and other educators who worked closely with the retarded were more concerned with instruction than with classification, major questions concerning the classification of students, the nature of programs, and the training of teachers still confronted administrators of school programs for mentally retarded students. The only thing for certain was that special programs were perceived as necessary by both parent groups and professionals. By 1930, sixteen states had passed legislation which at least permitted

public school systems to provide programs for mentally retarded students. Four years later it was reported that 84,458 mentally retarded children were enrolled in special education classes sponsored by 427 cities.[55]

Throughout the 1930s the Council for Exceptional Children and its various local and regional affiliates met to share ideas and discuss their common problems. Members of the Northern California chapter, and presumably others, felt neglected and characterized their field as the "orphan" of the educational system.[56] Numerous references were made in publications of the day to inferior classrooms, poor equipment, and ill-trained teachers.

Although a major national awakening and reform thrust would have to wait for another thirty years, neglect, though substantial, was never complete. Modest support from city school systems, even in the absence of state funding for special programs, coupled with a slight but ongoing public interest for protecting society and helping the handicapped, probably in that order, assured the maintenance of modest programs for mildly retarded children. Even the Federal Government showed some leadership, first by encouraging the sharing of program information through a White House Conference on Child Health and Protection in 1930,[57] and secondly through a short series of meetings with groups supporting the education of exceptional children later in the decade. At one such conference, held in 1934, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt spoke of shortcomings of the past and in favor of a more enlightened view toward the handicapped.[58]

Most of what occurred during the twenties and thirties probably could be best described as muddling along. Any recitation of program developments and numbers of children served tends to magnify the importance of what was being done. In point of fact, the total societal effort in behalf of mentally retarded children was modest. Public schools were operating more or less normally, all of which implies that they were coping as best they could with a significant range of pupil differences.

Significant budgetary problems and restricted priorities curtailed the legal extension of special classes for the retarded during the Great Depression and World War II years. Even at that, there were more retarded children enrolled in special classes at the end of 1940 than at the beginning of the depression.[59] While an actual decline in special class enrollment did occur between 1940 and 1948, in the decade after World War II numerous new state laws extended state authority and responsibility for special programs.[60] These developments brought for the first time special classes to retarded children in rural areas, and to severely retarded children in both cities and rural areas.

Yet, even as the services were being extended, difficulties for special education seemed to mount. The efficacy of segregated classes for mildly retarded children was debated in the professional and research literature, all to little avail. Soon the social, political, and legal implications of calssification and segregation would overrun the field. In at least a few near scandelous instances, the decision

to segregate racial or ethnic minority students appeared to have less to do with their alleged mental retardation than with the majority culture's desire for their social separation.[61]

One major difficulty faced by school authorities for more than half a century was in persuading the parents of mentally retarded children that their children were being well served by public school policies. The problem was acute from both ends of the retardation continuum. Parents of children who had been classified as mildly retarded--by whatever term was in current use--generally were hard pressed to understand why their children needed to be segregated at all. At the same time, those with severely retarded children took no comfort in the fact that their children had been excluded from the schools altogether. Although the first problem continued to grow worse until the 1970s, once parents of severely retarded children won the right to have their children served by the schools, they were less inclined to protest their treatment.

Just as the social dynamic of early twentieth century society and the rise of mass education gave birth to school programs for the retarded, so too did changing social values, new scientific insights concerning mental retardation, a renewed activist trend in the courts, and improved prosperity make dramatic change possible after 1960. Perspectives on the past changed dramatically also, with a more negative revisionist interpretation gaining the upper hand. Old heros of mental testing and special education were seen in a much more critical eye as newer values and later research influenced newer interpretations of the past. Sargent

Shriver, for one, reminded a 1963 White House Conference on Mental Retardation that many of the assembled members began their careers when the retarded "were the prisoners of the theories of men like Dr. Walter Fernald who said: 'The feebleminded are a parasitic, predatory class, never capable of self support or managing their own affairs.'"[62] On balance, Fernald's place in the history of special education likely will endure in at least a somewhat more favorable light than Shriver chose to remember him. Still, the significant historical point is that the attitudes of both Fernald and Shriver were in the mainstream of advanced contemporary opinion.

NOTES

[1]Throughout this paper terms are used in the context of the historical period about which the treatment of mentally retarded children is being described. The authors are aware that some of these terms are currently considered offensive as descriptors of mentally retarded persons. However, there are several reasons for employing the terms as they were used at the time in history being discussed. First, our data sources used them in imprecise ways, therefore it was impossible to relate a specific descriptor to current terminology. Second, some of the children who received services which are described herein, such as those in ungraded classes, probably would not qualify today as mentally retarded. Therefore, the decision was made to use the terms of this earlier historical period as they were used then.

[2]Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

[3]Larry P. v. Riles, 495 F. Supp. 926 (1979). Intelligence tests may no longer be used in California as a criterion for classifying Black students.

[4]Public Law 94-142 (1975).

[5]Charles R. Weldon, Lynn M. White, and Betty L. Wilson, "A Modern Wilderness--The Law of Education for the Handicapped," Mercer Law Review, 34 (Spring, 1983), 1045-1071.

[6]U. S., Reports of the Industrial Commission on Immigration and on Education, Vol. 15 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), pp. XLV, 68, 268, 271.

[7]Alfred A. Baumeister, "The American Residential Institution: Its History and Character," in Residential Facilities for the Retarded, ed. by Alfred A. Baumeister and Earl C. Butterfield (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 9-10.

[8]U. S., Bureau of the Census, Abstract of the Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, 3d ed. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), pp. 137, 144, 146.

[9]Reports of the Industrial Commission, pp. XX-XXI. A brief but excellent discussion of social history's role in the field of mental retardation is found in Marvin Lazerson, "Notes on Writing a History," in The Mentally Retarded and Society, ed. by Michael J. BeGab and Stephen A. Richardson (Baltimore: University Park Press, 1975), p. 43.

[10]See, for example, Henry B. Fairchild, The Melting-Po Mistake (Boston: Little, Brown. and Co., 1926).

[11]Harvey Wish, Society and Thought in Modern America, 2d ed. (New York: David McKay, 1962); Vernon Louis Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930), Vol. 3, Book 3.

[12]An excellent collection of such studies is found in Marvin Rosen, Gerald R. Clark, and Marvin S. Kivitz, eds., The History of Mental Retardation, Collected Papers (Baltimore: University Park Press, 1976), 2 vols.

[13]John D. Haney, Registration of City School Children (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1910), p. 76.

[14]Calif. Stat. 1943, c. 71, p. 630; Calif. Stat. 1903, c. 270, p. 388.

[15]"Fred O. Butler, M.D.," Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Oral History Phonotape No. 356.

[16]Leonard P. Ayres, Laggards in Our Schools (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1909).

[17]Ayres, Laggards, p. 5.

[18]U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Provision for Exceptional Children in Public Schools, Bulletin, 1911, No. 14 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), pp. 21-22.

[19]U. S., Provision for Exceptional Children, p. 22.

[20]U. S., Provision for Exceptional Children, p. 33.

[21]Ayres, Laggards, pp. 208-209.

[22]Ayres, Laggards, p. 185.

[23]Charles H. Burgess, "The Goddess, the School Book, and Compulsion," Harvard Educational Review, 46(May, 1976), 205.

[24]Seymour B. Sarason and John Doris, Educational Handicap, Public Policy, and Social History (New York: The Free Press, 1979), pp. 261-262.

[25]Total public and private school enrollment of persons between the ages of 14 and 17 in the U.S. increased from 15.4 percent of the population to 32.3 percent between 1910 and 1920; it increased from 32.3 percent to 51.4 percent between 1920 and 1930. Kern Alexander and K. Forbis Jordan, Legal Aspects of Educational Choice: Compulsory Attendance and Student Assignment (National Organization on Legal Problems of Education, 1973), p. 12.

[26]U. S., Provision for Exceptional Children, p. 12.

[27]Ayres, Laggards, pp. 193-197; U. S., Provision for Exceptional Children, pp. 42-65.

[28]Sarason and Doris, Educational Handicap...Social History, p. 297.

[29]Sarason and Doris, Educational Handicap...Social History, p. 300.

[30]Sarason and Doris, Educational Handicap...Social History, p. 302.

[31]Henry H. Goddard, Social Training of Defective Children (New York: World Book Co., 1914).

[32]Lewis M. Terman, The Measurement of Intelligence (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1916); The Intelligence of School Children (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1919).

[33]Lewis M. Terman, "Feeble-Minded Children in the Public Schools of California," School and Society, 5 (February, 1917), 164. A more complete discussion of Terman's early influence on public education in California, as well as a comprehensive chronicling of developments in special education generally, is found in John A. Simmons, "A Historical Perspective of Special Education in California," Ed.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1973, pp. 38-42.

[34]Twenty-ninth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1919 and 1920, p. 36, in California Legislature, Appendix to Journals of the Senate and Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, 1921.

[35]Twenty-ninth Biennial Report, pp. 35-36.

[36]Edward H. Reisner, "Social Change and its Effects on School Organization in the United States," in The Thirty-fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Bloomington, Ill.: Public School Publishing Co., 1936), pp. 37-38.

[37]See, for example, Lee J. Cronbach, "Five Decades of Public Controversy Over Mental Testing," American Psyshologist, 30(January, 1975), 1-14, and Russell Marks, The Idea of I.Q. (Washington: University Press of America, 1981).

[38]"History and Present Status of the Division," in Fourth Yearbook of the Division of Psychology and Educational Research (Los Angeles City School District, 1931), p. 7.

[39]"Administration in Development Schools," in First Annual Report of the Division of Psychology (Los Angeles City School District, 1919), p. 8.

[40]M. Frances Martin, "Development Centers and Rooms," in Third Yearbook of the Division of Psychology and Educational Research (Los Angeles City School District, 1929), p. 71.

[41]"Organization of the Eugene Street School," in Third Yearbook of the Division of Psychology and Educational Research (Los Angeles City School District, 1929), pp. 78-80.

[42]"Organization of the Eugene Street School," pp. 79-80.

[43]"Organization of the Eugene Street School," p. 80.

[44]"Special Classes and Centers for Mentally Defective Children," in Fourth Yearbook of the Division of Psychology and Educational Research (Los Angeles City School District, 1931), pp. 116-117.

[45]Leo B. Baiston, "Administrative Problems in the Education of Exceptional Children," in Proceedings of the First Annual Conference of the Northern California Council for the Education of Exceptional Children, April 26, 1930, p. 34.

[46]"Report of Group No. 2--Mental Tests, Notes Submitted to Dr. Bobb of Scotland as Report of Group Meeting in NEF at Elsinore, Denmark /circa June 1930/," in Virgil E. Dickson Articles, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, No. C-B 93, v. 1.

[47]"Berkeley Public Schools, Classes for the Mentally Retarded, A Presentation to PTA Conference in Long Beach, May, 1933," in Dickson Articles, Vol. 1.

[48]"Berkeley Public Schools, Bureau of Research and Guidance, Special Classes, May 25, 1931," in Dickson Articles, Vol. 1.

[49]Ibid.

[50]R. C. Scheerenberger, A History of Mental Retardation (Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes, 1983), p. 169.

[51]Sarason and Doris, Educational Handicap...Social History, pp. 304-307.

[52]Scheerenberger, A History of Mental Retardation, p. 202.

[53]Francis E. Lord, ed., "The CEC Story," Exceptional Children 47 (Sept., 1980), p. 54. A comprehensive account of developments in the Council for Exceptional Children, mainly written by Harley Z. Wooden and edited by Francis E. Lord is found in five numbers of volume 47 (Sept. and Nov. 1980, and Jan., March, and April 1981).

[54]Mabel Talbot, "Edouard Seguin," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 72(September, 1967), 186.

[55]Scheerenberger, A History of Mental Retardation, p. 201.

[56]"Forward," in Proceedings of the First Annual Conference of the Northern California Council for the Education of Exceptional Children, p. 12.

[57]White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, Sect. III, Education and Training, Committee on Special Classes, Special Education, The Handicapped and the Gifted (New York: Century, 1931).

[58]U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education, Coordination of Effort for the Education of Exceptional Children, Bulletin, 1935, No. 7 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1935), p. 3.

[59]Elise H. Martens and Emery Foster, Statistics of Special Schools and Classes for Exceptional Children, 1939-40 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942), p. 6.

[60]Elise H. Martens, State Legislation for Education of Exceptional Children, U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1949, No. 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. 24-33.

[61]Examples of instances where special classes were used to segregate minority students are found in Appendix A, "Leaders in Special Education," in Simmons, "A Historical Perspective of Special Education in California," pp. 30-36, 40-43, 201.

[62]U. S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, The White House Conference on Mental Retardation, Proceedings, Sept., 18-20, 1963 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 24.